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Monarchs and Monks in Mediaeval Serbia

by LOVETT F. EDWARDS

Pronounce c like ts; č and ć like tch; j like y; š like sh; and ž like s in measure.

THE monastery was visible from far across the plain. But it took three to four hours' hard walking to reach it from the village of Matejić at the foot of the mountain. It had been built on the ridge, more than 3000 feet up, above the plain of Kumanovo.

It was the Church of the Virgin of the Black Mountain, usually known by the name of the nearby village as Matejić, a magnificent five-cupola'd building erected at the best period of Serbo-Macedonian architecture. The fresco of the *ktitor*, or donor, usually to be found just inside the main portal, was unrecognizable. But it was mentioned in manuscripts as existent in 1300 and was probably built in the reign of Milutin, 1282-1321. Most of the frescoes are half a century later. When I visited it, the great monastery had been deserted for centuries. But following the recovery of Macedonia after World War I, an old priest, Pop Trajko, had been sent there as caretaker though there was not much he could do save prevent further pillage.

The Turks naturally cared little for these Christian monuments. After Turkish indif-

ference, even the appointment of Pop Trajko was a step in the right direction. Serbian artists and savants stressed the importance of preserving this precious heritage of art and of maintaining the monasteries, many of which had disappeared altogether. But little was done.

Curiously enough, their care has been left to a government avowedly indifferent to religion. Building on the slender beginnings of their predecessors, the present Yugoslav government has done much to preserve them and has shown a proper pride in these ancestral achievements. One result has been the Exhibition of Mediaeval Serbian Frescoes at the Edinburgh Festival this year and now at the Tate Gallery. Another, and more important, has been the care and preservation of the monasteries themselves.

There are a considerable number of the Serbian or Serbo-Macedonian monasteries. I have seen a good many of them. If anyone tells you he has seen them all, do not believe him. At best, he means that he has seen all the most famous ones. Not all are damaged;



A. J. Thornton





nica Krippner

St Jovan Kaneo, standing at the northern end of Lake Ohrid, is one of forty or more churches in the neighbourhood of the lake. Though it dates from the 14th century it still retains many features of the early Serbo-Macedonian style of which brick was the characteristic building material

several of the most beautiful are still in use and have suffered few alterations since the day they were built. Others have not been so lucky. Indiscriminate restorers have wrought havoc here and there; and wars and revolutions have more frequently taken their toll.

As I write I have a post-war booklet before me. Even allowing for the notorious falsehoods of the camera, it is easy to see signs of great improvement. The photograph of Matejić shows that the devastation has been halted and a certain amount of discreet restoration accomplished. Other photographs, taken at Sopočani, at Nerezi, at Markov Monastir, near Skopje, and elsewhere show that the picturesque disorder that I remember there has at least been tidied up, thereby restoring to those lovely churches something of their proper dignity.

I have chosen Matejić to introduce the mediaeval Serbian monasteries simply because it first occurred to me. It is true that it is one of the finest examples of its style and period but it cannot be compared with the great churches which the centuries have treated

more kindly, as for example, Dečani, Gračanica, Studenica, Ravanica, Kalenić or Resava, more usually known simply as Manasija (i.e. monastery), to mention only a few. Nor, even at their best, could its frescoes have been compared with the glories of Sopočani. On the other hand, it requires little imagination to see it once again in the times of its greatness, whereas it needs both faith and knowledge to bring to mind the wonders of more damaged foundations, such as Djurdjovi Stubovi or Gradac.

Slav Christianity began, to all practical purposes, with the missionary journeys of the two Salonica monks, Cyril and Methodius, in the 9th century. Their work, curiously enough, had little influence on the Balkans themselves. They devised a Slavonic script and used it in their translations of the Gospels. But this script was not that now known as the Cyrillic; it was the Glagolitic script, crabbed and complicated, that is still used in some churches along the Croat littoral.

It was after their expulsion from Central Europe that the architectural history of Slav

Christianity began. Their disciples, Clement and Naum, settled in south-west Macedonia on the shores of the two great lakes, Ohrid and Prespa, and built their monasteries there, and modified the Glagolitic script to the more fluent and comprehensible Cyrillic, the basic alphabet today of the majority of Slavs.

The Slav states of those early days were amorphous and transient. It was a time when every leader took what he could and any loose confederation of villages called itself a state. It was not until the latter half of the 10th century that two clearly defined units arose out of this confusion: the Serbian state of Raška and Zeta, covering what is roughly today Montenegro and the Ibar valley, and the Empire of the Macedono-Bulgarian Tsar Samuel, covering a far wider area and a serious rival to the Byzantine Empire itself.

As befits such a centre of Slav Christianity, there are some forty or more churches around the lake or in the city of Ohrid. A few are very old—St Sophia has some lovely 11th-century Byzantine frescoes, once overpainted but now being restored—but most were renovated in the great period of Serbo-Macedonian architecture, the 14th century. Of the great churches of Samuel's Empire little remains. There are some doubtful examples in Strumica and the ruins of his church and palace on the island of Aila in Lake Prespa.

These early brick-built Slav churches made little use of mosaic. Many were too poor and could not afford the skilled mosaic craftsmen. They relied on carved woodwork and fresco, mainly by local masters, and in so doing laid the groundwork for the great renaissance of Serbian art that was to follow.

Tsar Samuel's Empire disintegrated after his death, but Serbian political power and artistic reawakening went hand in hand. The founder of the great Nemanja dynasty, Stephen, was born in Ribnica—later Podgorica, now Titograd—in 1114. His father had been expelled from Raška for some dynastic quarrel. On his return to Raška as *veliki župan* (roughly, prince) he organized a state that was later to become a kingdom and finally, under Dušan, formally an empire. At its height it extended over most of Serbia, all Montenegro, and Macedonia to the gates of Salonica.

With the Nemanjas came their architecture. I can make no attempt to trace their dynastic history. In the two-and-a-half centuries of their power, to the death of Dušan in 1355, Serbia became the most powerful nation of the Balkans and with its growing power awoke an artistic renaissance that continued to flower even after the dissolution of the dynasty

until the coming of the Turks.

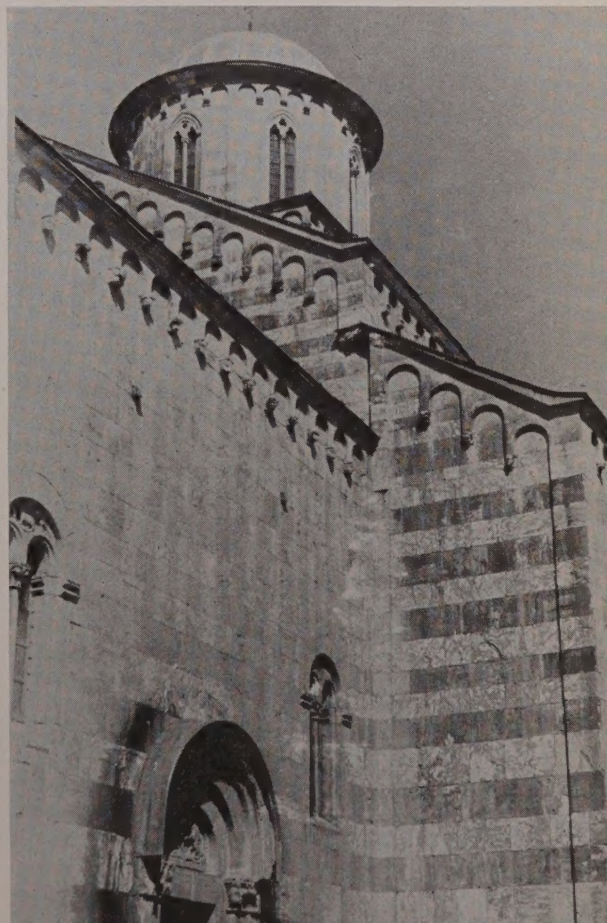
Perhaps the most extraordinary of the Nemanjas was Stephen's youngest son, Rastko. As a young man he was not attracted by court life and when only seventeen he fled from court with some wandering monks of Mount Athos. When his father's couriers finally caught up with him, he had already shaved his head and taken the monastic vows. The national epic says they returned to court only with the golden locks he had discarded.

But young Sava—his monastic name—was no recluse. He was soon employed on important diplomatic missions for the monks and got a training in statecraft that was to serve him well in later years.

In 1197 his father abdicated and came to Athos as the monk Simeon. There he built Hilendar, the centre of Serbian monastic life. There it was that Sava wrote his autobiography in a clear and vivid style that gives him the right to be called the first of the

High Dečani, built between 1327 and 1335 by the Franciscan friar, Vid of Kotor, already shows the influence of Western masons. Brick has now been replaced by bands of highly polished marble

Monica Kr





By courtesy of the Committee for Foreign Cultural Relations of the Yugoslav Government

(Above) *The Deposition*, from the monastery of Mileševo (c. 1256). (Below) *A coronation scene*, from the monastery of Žiča (c. 1220–30), the coronation church of the Nemanjas; it was called the “seven-gated”, since a new entrance was made in the surrounding walls for every monarch crowned



Monica Krippner



By courtesy of the Committee for Foreign Cultural Relations of the Yugoslav Government

The Angel on the Sepulchre, also from the monastery of Mileševo. The two Marys, carrying myrrh, are shown the empty tomb; below, Roman soldiers, who have been guarding it, are sleeping. Mileševo was founded by King Vladislav about 1236. St Sava's body was buried there until it was exhumed and burnt on the hill of Vračar near Belgrade by Sinan Pasha in 1595



Monica Krippner



By courtesy of the Committee for Foreign



By courtesy of the Yugoslav National Tourist Office

(Opposite, top) The monastery of Sopoćani, which was built about 1260 in Raška in the early years of the Nemanja dynasty. Its frescoes show a natural freedom of line and composition that has led many experts to believe that, had it not been for the Turkish invasions, the Renaissance would first have blossomed in mediaeval Serbia. (Opposite, bottom) One of the frescoes at Sopoćani: Christ appears to the two Marys after the Resurrection. (Above) The monastery of Resava, in a far northern valley, is the last of the Serbian churches of the great era of architecture. It was built, or more probably rebuilt, in the first years of the 15th century by the Despot Stephen Lazarević, at a time when the greater part of the Serbian state had already been swallowed by the Turkish invaders and the miserable remnant retained only a tenuous and transient independence. The fortress walls, built in the same style as those of the Smederevo citadel, recall the troublous times of its construction. (Right) A warrior saint from the monastery of Resava



Serbian writers. His father died in 1204 and the state he founded began to fall apart. But Sava was not only a saint; he was a Nemanja. He left Hilendar, went back to Serbia, composed the quarrels and ensured the succession.

Sava saw clearly that the state could not exist without some central controlling force. He found this in the Church. After the fall of Constantinople to the Latins in 1204 he asked and obtained from the exiled Patriarch the independence of the Serbian Church, becoming its first archbishop. He fixed his residence at the monastery of Žiča, whose blood-red cupolas, painted after the Mount Athos manner, still stand magnificently in the wooded valleys near Kraljevo—so named after the ancient kings, but now renamed Rankovićevo. Thence he controlled the destinies of the Serbian Church until 1238 when he went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

St Sava saved Serbia from religious faction and the encroachment of the Roman Church. The religious heresy of the West had been forestalled, but its artistic ideas entered without check. Masons from Dalmatia worked on the great churches and monasteries built by the Nemanjas and brought with them the secrets of their art. Most were anonymous, but we know that a Franciscan friar, Vid of Kotor, worked on the great church of Visoki Dečani, whose wonder was so great that the king in whose reign it was built is usually known as Dečanski. Some of its unique beauty is due to the harmony of its proportions, but most to its material, courses of reddish, steel-blue and grey polished marble which have mellowed to a lovely gradation of tone.

The earlier brick is now replaced by marble and stone and the simple decoration of the earlier churches by intricately carved doors and windows with luxuriant designs of birds, beasts and flowers. Also, in the larger churches, walls, vaults and pillars are all covered with frescoes, giving an extraordinary richness to the interiors. The combination of Byzantine and Western influences has produced a new style, rich and harmonious, and unique in architecture.

The frescoes too show an extraordinary advance in subject and technique. The hieratic stiffness of the Byzantine tradition, founded on mosaic, is replaced by an originality of design and freedom of technique that, to my mind, excels the contemporary Italian masters. It is a fascinating theory, for which there is much evidence, that had it not been for the factions following the death of Dušan and the subsequent Turkish conquest, the glories of

the Renaissance would first have blossomed, not in Italy, but in this land, condemned by history to five centuries of servitude.

The last great Nemanja, Stephen Dušan the Mighty, turned his eyes southward. He fixed his court at Skopje. In Macedonia the Byzantine tradition was too strong and the Dalmatian masters seldom came. None the less, splendid churches were erected by Dušan or his nobles. There was Matejić, for example, and the church of St George at Staro Nagoričane, near Kumanovo. This lovely church, probably of the 11th century, was completely rebuilt in the style of the Nemanjas.

Before Dušan's death the Turks were already in the Balkans as mercenaries. But it was another century before the final defeat of the Serbo-Bosnian confederation on the Field of Blackbirds—Kosovo—in 1389. During this period there was still construction, especially in Macedonia, but with the disappearance of the Imperial power the foundations were smaller and less significant. Even after Kosovo there was a twilight period of semi-independence for another seventy years. Serbia was still a wealthy state, especially under the "despots"—the Imperial title had lapsed—"Tsar" Lazar and George Branković.

This period was the last flowering of the Serbian architectural genius. It developed farther to the north, mainly in the valley of the Morava, and is thus known as "the Morava school". The great churches of this period borrow from Eastern models but preserve the monumental form and to some extent the materials of the Raška school. A particularly striking innovation is the increased height of the cupolas and the decorative use of the belfry. Also the decoration becomes far more elaborate, so that in such churches as Kalenić it looks almost like lace.

The Turkish attacks soon broke down the petty states of the Macedonian lords and even the stronger states of Serbia proper were often mere vassals, paying tribute and waiting the hour of final dissolution. Only a few years before the final cataclysm, ending in the fall of the fortress of Smederevo on the Danube, Serbian architectural genius showed a final flickering in the rebuilding of the great fortified monastery of Resava.

The fall of Smederevo marked the fall of Serbia for nearly five hundred years. It also marked the end of a magnificent chapter of artistic achievement. The few churches and monasteries founded after that date merely display the dying embers of a once great tradition.

Fungi of the Woods

by DR J. RAMSBOTTOM, O.B.E.

Dr Ramsbottom was Keeper of Botany at the British Museum (Natural History) from 1930 to 1950. His book on Mushrooms and Toadstools—a subject widely misapprehended, especially in Britain where we undervalue the virtues of fungi as food—has just been published by Collins in the New Naturalist Series. The colour-plates accompanying the present article appear as illustrations to the volume and are reproduced by permission of the publishers and the Editors of the Series

PROBABLY most people in this country are under the impression that mushrooms and toadstools occur for the most part in fields and pastures. This is doubtless because of the prevalent belief that only the common Field-Mushroom is edible and worthy of consideration; the rest pass unnoticed except when one of unusual shape or colour attracts attention. The facts are that very many toadstools are edible—indeed only a dozen or so are poisonous—and that fungi are much more common in woods and forests than in fields. In continental countries where there are forests, people of all classes collect from them in the proper season toadstools for food, and these are always on sale in the local markets; large quantities are dried or pickled for winter use particularly in those regions where there is lack of vegetables.

Generally speaking only certain easily recognized species like Cep (*Boletus edulis*), Chanterelle (*Cantharellus cibarius*), Wood-Blewit (*Tricholoma nudum*), Saffron Milk-cap (*Lactarius deliciosus*), and Morel (*Morchella esculenta*) are eaten—fungi which have long been of good repute, though other species, locally well known, are sometimes favoured. Accidents are rare. They would be commoner if more species were poisonous, for those mishaps which occur are usually due to carelessness, to taking chances or to placing reliance on the useless rules for distinguishing edible species, which, given by Greek and Latin writers, were broadcast by the Herbalists following the Renaissance—peeling and the absence of effect on a silver spoon are the best known and have a world-wide currency. It is unwise to sample any unknown species whether it answers these tests or not, even if it “looks edible” (whatever that may mean), or even if it has been nibbled by rabbit or squirrel, or pitted by slug. It is better to reject a fungus before rather than after a meal.

On the whole, woodland fungi are larger than those of pastures, presumably because of the moister atmosphere and the shelter given

by the trees from the drying effect of direct sunlight, and wind. As a rule shade does not affect them for, as they have no green colouring matter (chlorophyll), they do not need light to form their organic material. But this they must have and so they resort for it to the living and the dead.

It is this special kind of nutrition that makes fungi so important in the economy of life. Those which live parasitically on trees cause obvious damage to branch and bole or, attacking the heart-wood through the stubs of broken branches, faulty bark, or roots nibbled by rabbits, reduce it to powder, often leading to the fall of the tree, and always rendering it unfit for timber. Many of these parasites are bracket-fungi such as the Razor-Strop Fungus (*Polyporus betulinus*) which is so common on birches. All, however, is not disease and death: fortunately there is destruction and dissolution, brought about mainly by fungi whose activities follow death, the so-called saprophytic fungi as opposed to parasites, though no hard and fast line can be drawn between them. As it is, fallen trees, tree-stumps, twigs, dead leaves, fruits, and herbaceous plants litter the ground, but only for a comparatively short time; were there no ‘natural decay’ dire results would ensue, if merely because of mechanical interference with the vital activities of plants and animals due to rubbish; even though, as there would be no putrefaction, there would be no nasty smell—a sort of impotent respectability. Of equal importance is the fact that with the lack of the break-down of the chemical constituents of the plants there would be no return to the soil of the substances necessary for its enduring fertility.

The relation between fungi and their habitats is as close and definite as with flowering plants and there are the same general factors controlling distribution—moisture, temperature, light and soil—though light is not of primary importance. Thus mushrooms and toadstools are most abundant immediately after rains in late summer and autumn. Con-



All Kodachromes, except one, by Paul L. de Laszlo

The Fly-Agaric (Amanita muscaria) is probably our best-known toadstool, growing usually amongst birches or occasionally under conifers. The white polka-dots on its scarlet cap are the remains of an old skin, and enclose the young fungus; both the gills and the stem, with its conspicuous ring, are likewise white. That the skin can readily be peeled shows how misleading is this accepted 'test' for determining edibility, since the Fly-Agaric is poisonous, the symptoms very closely resembling those caused by Deadly Nightshade. It is the only fungus illustrated here that is definitely poisonous

The Sulphur-Tuft (Hypholoma fasciculare) is another common fungus: its name derives from the colour of the cap and stem. Gills, if fertile, change from yellow to green as the purplish-brown spores begin to mature; sterile gills remain yellow, while the flesh, which tastes bitter, is also yellow. The Sulphur-Tuft frequently grows in large clusters on tree-stumps of all kinds, gradually reducing them to a pulpy mass that finally disintegrates, when the fungus seems to grow on the ground. Its threads coalesce into fine strings like the spawn of the mushroom, and can be seen permeating the wood



Collybia dryophila occurs commonly in deciduous woods, particularly oak. It is hard to identify by its colour alone, for that may be anything from near-white to a reddish brown. The gills are usually whitish, narrow and extremely crowded. The base of the stem, just below the surface, sends out mycelial strings which run along the ground amongst leaves and twigs



Collybia radicata is common, usually under beech. The cap is generally some shade of brown but may be whitish; the gills are shining white and widely spaced. The stem gradually tapers downwards to the tree-root from which it has grown: the length of the 'root' depends upon the depth of the substratum below the surface



The Smooth Ink Cap (Coprinus atramentarius), though generally attached to buried wood, is not restricted to forests. It easily penetrates resistant surfaces like paths or hard tennis-courts. As in other species of Coprinus, the cap slowly undergoes self-digestion, with the production of a black 'ink'—so ensuring proper liberation of the spores

Lycoperdon pyriforme is the only British Puff-Ball that grows on wood. It is common on logs and attached to buried wood. More or less pear-shaped, it often grows in clusters so dense that many of the 'fruits' are distorted by mutual pressure. Like other Puff-Balls, this species originates from white mycelial cords





The Oyster-Mushroom (Pleurotus ostreatus) is an edible species that grows, as a rule, near the bottom of trees in clustered overlapping masses which last about a month. It is fan-like in shape, and although it generally grows straight out of the trunk, it sometimes has a short stem-like base. The fleshy cap changes from dark brown to pale grey or fawn

Tremella mesenterica is of jelly-like consistency, becoming shrivelled and horny when dry. It grows upon fallen branches, on furze, broom and ivy all year long, and has a remarkable power of withstanding the worst weather. There are several similar gelatinous fungi, and all differ in their essential internal structure (basidium) from fleshy toadstools





*The vivid popular name for *Geoglossum difforme* is Adder's Tongue: its colour is purplish-black, its body often irregularly twisted, while in damp weather it feels sticky to the finger. Its tufts present a curiously sinister appearance when growing amid the short mossy grass where alone it thrives—like many other fungi that find their habitat of choice both outside and within forests, it is restricted in woodlands to open glades where the grass is not long and rank. Although in appearance it strongly resembles the Fairy Clubs, it actually belongs to an entirely different genus*



Eric Hosking

Kodachrome

The Chanterelle (Cantharellus cibarius) is a typical woodland species, appearing first in early summer, chiefly under oaks and beeches. It is one of the best-known edible species, but requires long, slow cooking to bring out its flavour. In colour it is egg-yellow and has a sweet, pleasant odour usually said to resemble that of apricots. When young it is shaped somewhat like a top, but the edge of the cap grows quickly and becomes wavy and irregular. The gills run down the stem, and are unusual in being shallow with a rounded edge, so that they look not unlike veins that fork and join

tinuous rain, however, hinders their development because then the soil becomes waterlogged and the fungal threads (mycelium) are unable to obtain the air they need—like all other organisms they must breathe.

As fungi are dependent upon flowering plants for their food their distribution is, in general, the same. We can speak of the fungi of grasslands, marshes, sand-dunes, woodlands and so on. Some species occur in all kinds of woodlands but others are more choosy and prefer, or even restrict themselves to, special types. The main distinctions are between deciduous and coniferous woods as might be expected from the difference in the nature of the litter; though each kind of woodland, be it beech, oak, birch, alder or other, has some characteristic species.

Obviously a fungus which is more or less restricted in its parasitism to a given tree occurs only where that tree is. Thus the Beef-Steak Fungus (*Fistulina hepatica*) grows almost invariably on oak, and *Fomes annosus* on pine. There are all degrees of parasitism, ranging from comparative harmlessness to death-dealing. Some fungi, for example, are such weak parasites that although their fruit-bodies appear on a tree-trunk year after year, showing that their mycelium must be continuously present and obtaining nutriment, the infection is so local that it causes little inconvenience. The large, beautiful *Hydnum erinaceum*, wholly white with long spines hanging downwards so that there is a suggestion of an extravagant epaulet, is a rare fungus which I have known for over thirty years on a beech in Burnham Beeches, the tree continuing to flourish. In contrast the common Honey-Tuft (*Armillaria mellea*) is a most destructive parasite killing all kinds of trees and shrubs and persisting as a saprophyte on their remains; it is this fungus that causes wood to become luminous.

Those species growing on the ground are dependent for their nutrition mainly on leaf-mould and litter, for their vegetative threads grow there and not usually directly in the soil itself. Consequently it is the chemical and physical nature of the plant remains, and not of the soil, which are of prime importance.

Beech woods and pine woods are the most prolific in both species and numbers: the dense leaf canopy which, by reducing light, prevents the growth of flowering plants does not deter toadstools but provides a cosy, moist environment for them.

Some of the ground fungi always grow in close proximity to trees. The association is much closer than would be suspected for the threads of the fungus form a definite union with the

rootlets of the tree, so close that it has been given the name fungus-root (mycorrhiza). All forest trees have these mycorrhizas. The exact significance of the symbiosis between fungus and tree is not yet fully understood though it is known that in certain soils trees cannot thrive in the absence of their fungal partner. Some toadstools are apparently able to form mycorrhiza with only one tree, e.g. the golden-yellow *Boletus elegans* with larch. At the other extreme our common pine has been shown experimentally to enter into union with more than thirty different species.

A woodland has a complex structure. We speak of, say, an oak wood or a pine forest because the trees are the most conspicuous elements giving the general outline and characteristics. The tree is the dominant organism but it is one amongst very many for there is teeming life above and below ground; shrubs, herbs, mosses, lichens, bacteria, birds, insects, rodents all playing their part in the community, acted on by their environment and, in their turn, influencing it both for themselves and other organisms. The general result is an equilibrium which may be influenced in various ways and to a greater or lesser extent either by external factors such as fire, flood or gales, or by some organism of the community failing to carry out its normal activities, either by dying out or by running amuck. One of the most puzzling facts is the occasional abundance of toadstools in a small portion of a wood when the remainder, not apparently differing in any way, is practically free from them. It is the vegetative part of a toadstool, the underground mycelium or spawn, which is physiologically active. Its association with the roots of trees may even be a factor in determining whether a wood can exist in certain areas.

It is only in recent years that the important part played by fungi has begun to be realized. Their activities as parasites are sometimes only too obvious, not only the large ones on trees but the microscopic forms on herbaceous plants and all kinds of other organisms. Their work as scavengers and in breaking down material and so rendering it available for flowering plants, either alone or in conjunction with bacteria and insects, is of more fundamental importance.

The distribution of toadstools in a wood presents many problems, some of which obviously have their solution in a proper understanding of their biological necessities. It is an attractive study calling for many observations which can be made without laboratory equipment and so are fully open to the amateur naturalist.

The Coast Indians of British Columbia

by GEORGE WOODCOCK

THE first Europeans to make contact with the Indians of the Pacific North-West appear to have been a party of Russian sailors who, on July 17, 1741, landed at Sitka Sound in Alaska from the *St Paul*, attached to Bering's expedition, in search of water. They never returned to tell their experience; and it was left for Captain James Cook, who landed at Nootka, on Vancouver Island, on March 29, 1778, to describe these Indians for the first time. Cook's experience was happier than that of the Russians, for he was welcomed by three canoe-loads of chiefs who cast eagle-down on the water and delivered long orations to the accompaniment of rattles carved in the shapes of birds. They impressed him by their dirt, their phlegmatic appearance, above all by the fantastic wooden masks which they wore for ceremonial occasions. "If travellers or voyagers," he remarked, "in an ignorant and credulous age, when many unnatural or marvellous things were supposed to exist, had seen a number of people decorated in this manner, they would readily have believed, and in their relations would have attempted to make others believe, that there existed a race of beings partaking of the nature of man and beast."

But neither Cook, nor his unfortunate predecessors, can have realized the complexity of culture and social organization that became evident as the British, Spanish and Russian explorers and traders gradually made contact with the various peoples of this long coastline and its many islands.

Linguistically alone, the Coast Indians were divided into no less than five groups, so distinct that, for example, the Haida language of the Queen Charlottes was not merely incomprehensible to the Tsimshian of the opposite mainland, but was even as remote structurally as, say, Greek from Hebrew. Within the language groups themselves there were variations which amounted to more than dialects. While the salmon-fishing Cowichan of the lower Fraser Valley belonged to the same Salishan group as the hunting Shuswap of the Cariboo plateau, their speeches were at

least as mutually incomprehensible as French and Spanish. The number of Indians west of the Rockies and north of the Columbia when the white men appeared was certainly much less than 200,000, but they spoke at least twenty distinguishable languages, as well as many local dialects of great divergence.

The peoples of the coast, from the Tlingit in the north, through the Tsimshian, Haida, Kwakiutl and Nootka, down to the coastal Salish tribes in the south, enjoyed an abundance of raw materials such as no other non-agricultural culture has ever experienced. The protected channels from Skagway to Seattle were populated from spring to autumn by successive waves of salmon; from the great runs of oolachon (also known as "lampfish" or "candlefish"), the Indians obtained the equivalent of butter and oil; halibut, herring, seals and sea-lions were numerous, while the Nootka even hunted whales from small canoes. The dense rain-forests provided a wealth of vegetable foods and sheltered much game, while, most important, they gave an inexhaustible supply of gigantic trees, some of which, like the various cedars and alders, were easily workable.

From such materials the coastal tribes built an elaborate and abundant life. Their tools were limited in scope, since, though they were familiar with copper and used it for personal ornaments and for the ceremonial shields which were among their paraphernalia of chiefly dignity, they used only stone and jade for implements. But, within the bounds imposed by the nature of such tools, they had evolved surprisingly adequate techniques. They built large wooden houses with gigantic carved timbers and boarded roofs and walls; they constructed canoes large enough to carry forty men over the open sea; they made textiles in a remarkable richness of design from bark fibres and mountain goat wool; from various woods they wrought intricately carved and coloured masks, boxes, rattles and ritual objects.

Their supplies of food were so abundant that the year was divided functionally into



British Museum

When 18th-century voyagers reached the coast of British Columbia, they found small villages (above) set on the shores of the many rocky inlets. The house-fronts were painted and carved; while (below) they saw, inside, carved houseposts which usually supported the beams of the roof

British Museum





Provincial Archives, Victoria, B.C.



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One of the most celebrated Indian chiefs of the Pacific coast of Canada in the 18th century was Maquinna (left) whom many travellers including Cook and Meares met and wrote about. In a contemporary Spanish engraving he is seen wearing the special hat of woven spruce-roots used only by chiefs and decorated with a representation of the Nootka whale-hunt at which the chief had the right to throw the first harpoon. (Above) The potlatch or gift-giving feast held by Maquinna at Nootka "on having given his daughter the signs of her entering puberty"—probably this means the giving of names and titles which was validated by the distribution of presents to the guests. The potlatch was a central institution in Coast Indian life. No social position could be assumed, no song or dance could be appropriated by an individual without such a ceremonial. Moreover, the recipient of a present must return something doubly valuable to the original giver at his own next potlatch. Thus, even daily life was dominated by the need to accumulate a sufficient quantity of goods for the forthcoming feasts

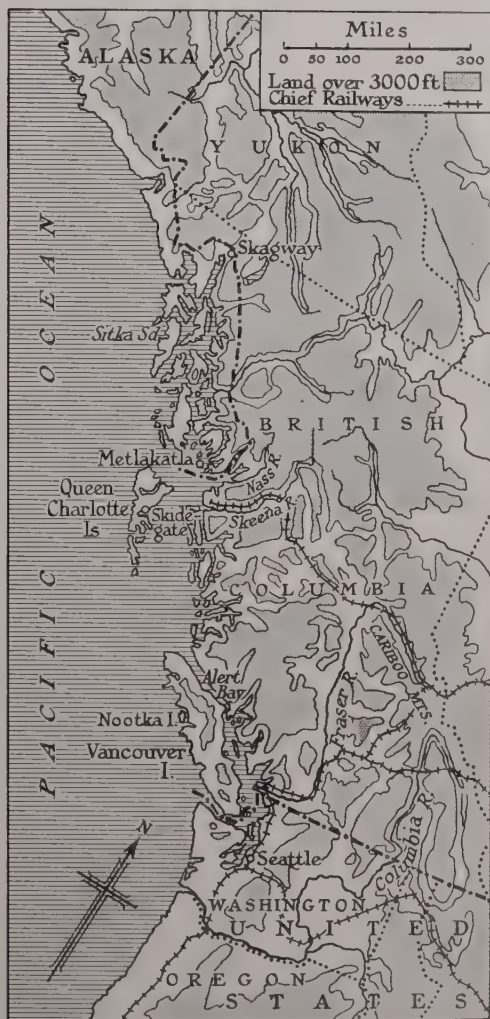
two parts. The summer season was devoted to laying in stores. The winter was given to art and ceremony. The men carved and painted, made boxes, cooking vessels and boats, the women wove blankets and baskets, and in this work there was a curious division of form as well as function. The men used a symbolic and quasi-religious style which, while distortion was allowed to the point of grotesqueness, was based ultimately on the natural forms of beings and beasts connected by doctrine and legend with the tribe's well-being and spiritual life; the women's designs were secular and entirely geometrical.

Ritual activities of various kinds dominated the winter months. Among the Kwakiutl this change from the practical life of summer was carried so far that the rule of the chiefs lapsed and the religious secret societies, led by the Hamatsa or Cannibal Society, assumed direction of tribal affairs for the ceremonial season. The secret societies were held to be custodians of animistic tradition, the intermediaries through which, during winter, the spirit world was brought directly into the affairs of men.

An aspect of coastal ceremonial life which is perhaps more characteristic even than the secret societies, and which illustrates the close connection between the social life of the coast tribes and the extreme abundance of their environment, was the institution of the potlatch. In describing this, it is necessary first to remark on the intense development of the idea of property on this coast. Not only portable objects, but also fishing grounds, clam beaches, berry-picking grounds, were traditionally assigned as property to various families. Prisoners were not absorbed into the tribe as among the Plains Indians, but became the absolute property of their captors and could be used or sold or killed as their owners wished. Even the equivalent of copyright existed, for property was involved in such intangible objects as songs and dances, names and crests. Property, however, was not without obligations; the chief had a prior right over the products of the dependents who shared his house, but it was unthinkable that any man should starve while food was available. Only the surplus, after all were fed and clothed, would be used by the chief for trading or ritual. Similarly, the right to use a dance or a name, as well as the assumption of chieftainship, the coming to maturity of a child, the dedication of a memorial pole, only became valid after a potlatch had been given. At this feast the chief not merely fed his guests; he also gave away as much material goods as he had been able to collect. The

more he distributed, the greater his prestige, while he also had the privilege of boasting of his own greatness and generosity and of taunting his guests with their meanness. But, though a chief might temporarily beggar himself by a particularly lavish potlatch, there was an adequate mechanism of readjustment, since his guests were obliged, for their own good names, to return his gifts with at least 100 per cent interest whenever they themselves held a potlatch. Nevertheless, it was still open for a chief who wished to show his particular superiority to destroy his goods, and thus to relinquish the hope of repayment. What he lost materially would be gained in repute, and to the Coast Indian this was, and remains, more important than anything else.

Despite the variety of language, there was much community in culture and social organization among the tribes on the coast, caused



A. J. Thornton

partly by similarity of material environment and partly by the constant intercourse through war and trade, which, in the form of such desired goods as oolachon grease, abalone shells and copper, was carried on regularly over the thousand miles from the Columbia estuary to Skagway. To overcome language differences, the Chinook dialect of the Columbia became a trading jargon; later, embellished with words from various European tongues, it was adopted by white traders, and still lingers in the common speech of the coast. The Indians now tend to despise it, and I once heard a Tsimshian refer to it as "pig language" and insist on being addressed in English.

Dances and rites were also traded among the various tribes. Moreover, down the Alaskan coast and through northern British Columbia as far south as the Kwakiutl-speaking Bella Bella, there existed a phratric system

which overran tribal and linguistic barriers. A number of exogamous and matrilineal divisions, varying from two to four in number, existed in all the northern villages, and the demands of phratric brotherhood often overcame tribal loyalties: a Tlingit of the Eagle phratry could not marry or enslave a Tsimshian Eagle, and out of his territory he could expect hospitality and protection from his phratric brethren.

Within the tribes political organization was often slight; the villages were virtually autonomous, and if they joined together for war, it was on a voluntary basis. Within villages the inhabitants were divided according to house and to local clans composing the various phratries. Each house and phratry had its chief, but in most tribes village chiefs were chosen only for particular purposes, to lead war or fishing parties, and among the

In 1887, when this photograph was taken, Skidegate village in the Queen Charlotte Islands still retained the original form of the old Coast Indian villages. The dwellings, decorated by houseposts, are communal, each being inhabited by a chief, his relatives and the commoners of his clan

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The architecture of the villages as well as the nature of the gifts presented at potlatches had changed considerably by the early 20th century when this photograph was taken at Alert Bay: kitchen-ware had replaced the cedar-bark blankets, slaves and canoes distributed in Maquinna's day

Tsimshian alone a rigid hereditary tribal chieftainship existed.

On this elaborate culture the effects of white influence were particularly complex, and there is probably no more striking example of a primitive society in which the first contact with Europeans brought an exuberant cultural and social development that continued with almost feverish intensity for

several decades before it was followed by the inevitable disintegration.

European influence on the Coast began with the Russian exploitation of the Aleutians in the 1760s and the later appearance on Vancouver Island of Cook and the Spaniards from Mexico. Until the Fraser Valley gold rush of the 1850s, the main concern of Europeans in the Pacific North-West was the fur



E. S. Curtis

(Above) A Coast Indian woman, about 1900, painting a spruce-root hat. Her silver bracelet and mantle of woven cedar-bark fibres are further instances of the Coast Indians' technical skill in fashioning clothes and ornaments using only simple tools and locally obtained materials. Their gift for embellishing objects of everyday use is exemplified (opposite, top) in their canoes decorated with heraldic designs and (opposite, bottom) in the huge carvings that adorned house-fronts



E. S. Curtis



E. S. Curtis

trade; the North-West Company and, later, the Hudson's Bay Company replaced individual traders but, though they set up forts throughout the present territories of British Columbia, Washington and Oregon, they made little effort to infringe on tribal life, since they relied on the goodwill of the Indians to maintain their trade.

Contact with Europeans, even when it was indirect in the form of trade through intervening tribes, brought an immense technological change in the life of the Coast. The Indians replaced their primitive stone adzes with steel adzes and knives, and were able to prepare their carvings not only far more quickly, but also with greater finish. At the same time, trade in sea otter and other skins brought a wealth in European goods which provided the chiefs not merely with the means to employ artists on a much more lavish scale than ever before, but also with the goods for potlatch feasts to dedicate the new works of art. The combination of increased technical powers and greater patronage resulted, during almost the whole 19th century, in a great

wave of craftsmanship in which the various tribes produced an immense quantity of fine work marked by increasing versatility of design. It is to this period that the heraldic and memorial poles (commonly and erroneously called "totem poles"), which are most familiarly associated with the Coast Indians, are to be attributed; the interior posts of houses had been carved for centuries beforehand, but the isolated poles, with their opportunities for ostentatious display of the chief's pretensions, appear to date from the period of unexampled prosperity that followed the first contact with Europeans. The best work of all these tribes—the poles of the Haida and the Niskae (a Tsimshian people on the Nass River), the grotesque masks of the Kwakiutl, the naturalistic masks and elaborate rattles of the Tsimshian, all belong to the 19th century, and the attributions to earlier periods sometimes seen in European museums are usually wrong. The celebrated poles at Alert Bay, many of which found their way into European collections, were not erected until as late as the 1890s, so long did the great artistic revival

Kwakiutl dancers of the Hamatsa or secret cannibal society in their grotesque bird-masks. Religious secret societies took charge of much of the tribes' life during the winter ceremonial seasons though these societies largely fell into disuse by the beginning of the twenties of this century



last in the more isolated parts of the North-West Pacific coast.

But this hectic stimulation of cultural activity was linked intimately with the influences that produced the break-up of Coastal tribal life. Prestige began to stem less from prowess and tradition than from the ability to succeed in trading; every commoner who had been lucky in hunting became an aspirant to chiefly rank, obtained through the giving of elaborate potlatches, and the traditional order, never particularly cohesive, became further disintegrated. Moreover, the increasing extravagance of potlatch ceremonies involved the chiefs in a network of mutual obligations which led often to disputes and petty warfare, and introduced the phenomenon of insolvency into Indian life. Some chiefs, rather than face the shame of not paying their potlatch debts, either committed suicide or made war to vindicate their honour or to win slaves. Slavery and slave-raids persisted well into the later 19th century, despite the efforts of the white authorities to stamp them out. During the 1920s one of the characteristic figures of the village in which I live was an old Salish woman who in her youth had been a slave of the Nootka.

During the later 19th century external influences began to militate strongly against the Indians. Towards the end of the 1840s, smallpox spread northward from the fur-trading centre of Victoria, decimating the tribes and often exterminating whole villages. It was followed by tuberculosis, and the series of white men's plagues continued well into the 20th century with the influenza epidemic of 1918, which in some places had an effect as disastrous as smallpox in an earlier time.

The epidemics were followed by the onset of economic shortage. The almost total extinction of the sea otter brought an end to the early prosperity based on furs, while white fishermen with more efficient methods began to reduce drastically the abundance of fish. The Coast Indians began to experience a hunger that had been rare in their primitive days. Over a century, the results of disease and starvation have reduced these tribes to less than a fourth of their numbers when the Europeans first appeared.

No less serious than the loss in numbers was the disintegration in morale. The Indians began to regard themselves and to be regarded by others as a doomed race (anthropologists before World War I had little doubt that they would soon die out, as one group, the Tsetsaut, had already done), and this pessimistic resignation made their hold on their cul-

tural heritage progressively weaker as the 19th century drew to a close. It also made them less inclined to resist the aggressive attitude of the white authorities, who set out to isolate them in reservations so as to make the rest of the country free for settlement. Furthermore, the missionaries gained an increasing influence and, with one or two notable exceptions, deliberately attempted to destroy, under the accusation of paganism, the Indian social pattern and its cultural manifestations.

Some missionaries, like Duncan of Metlakatla, herded their converts into mission towns, where they sought to turn them into sober and industrious Victorian working men. The secret societies (whose ritual miming of cannibalism the missionaries mistook for the real thing) were especial targets of ecclesiastical attack. Indians were incited to burn down their own memorial and heraldic poles as symbols of idolatry; this was another misconception, since the Coast Indians did not regard their poles as idols and had no image worship. But perhaps the most disastrous attack on traditional Indian life engineered by the missionaries in Canada was the legal prohibition of the potlatch. On the face of it there were plausible reasons for wishing to end potlatches; their encouragement of waste and indebtedness grew more serious as the Indians became poorer, and bred turbulence and jealousy. Yet the potlatch was a key institution in coastal society, and where the authorities succeeded in abolishing it, communal life immediately lost significance.

The worst period for the Indians was from the end of the 19th century up to the 1930s. Since then their position has begun to improve, as a result of generally better times, of a less prejudiced attitude among non-Indians, and of an awakening among the Indians themselves. In particular, the adoption of modern fishing methods has brought back something of the old prosperity. Yet these economic improvements have not been so immediately effective as one might have imagined in improving the physical condition of the coastal tribes. The incidence of tuberculosis remains many times higher than among white people, while an almost complete lack of dietary knowledge often actually produces malnutrition in the midst of financial plenty. Many of my Indian acquaintances, whose fathers lived on a balanced and nutritious diet of salmon, game and wild fruits and vegetables, now feed on tinned goods, worthless white bread and whisky—when they can get it (in case of need they are liable to fall back



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A Kwakiutl dancing mask. These masks took the form of carved wooden faces of human beings, of beasts and mythical monsters, representing the spirits that were evoked in the winter ceremonies

on hair tonic or lemon essence). Even in mission villages, where the people were taught to grow vegetables, the former gardens are now tangles of grass and empty cans. This is not necessarily a sign of laziness. An Indian will always work hard for something he considers worth while, such as an elaborate community hall that brings credit to his village; when I was in the prosperous mission village of Metlakatla two years ago, there was a brisk competition among the younger people in building themselves modern houses equipped with all the gadgets dear to the North American heart. In this they were actuated much more by the thought of prestige than that of comfort, for the Coast Indian still considers his wealth more for the repute it brings him than for the material pleasure he might gain from it.

The return to relative prosperity, coupled with a resurgence of Indian self-consciousness during the past fifteen or twenty years, has led here and there to a hankering for the old tribal patterns. Some of these have never died out. In the coastal fjords and the remoter

valleys the secret societies still perform their winter ceremonials. The exogamous restrictions of the phratric system have survived, and the custom of buying a wife with presents to her maternal relatives has persisted among nominal Christians. The last few years have seen a revival of the more spectacular customs. On the Skeena River, for instance, I found quite a number of memorial poles which had been erected during the past decade, while potlatching has undergone a great revival since some astute Indian discovered a loophole in the law which allows them to carry on their feasts with only slight variations on the traditional pattern. Now the gifts have become modernized, sewing machines, wireless sets and money replace the original cedar blankets and slaves or the grey Hudson's Bay blankets of a later era, but the old boasting speeches and the traditional dances and songs continue.

This return to certain traditional forms does not mean that the old culture is still a living reality. The artistic manifestations accompanying the revival, such as the new



Provincial Museum, Victoria, B.C.

(Above) Kwakiutl women, wearing modern high-heeled shoes with the traditional lightning-snake and wolf-head masks in a revival of the ancient ceremonial dances. (Below) Men and women performing a Hamatsa or Cannibal Dance against a background of motor-cars and electricity supply poles

Provincial Museum, Victoria, B.C.





uff, from Provincial Museum, Victoria, B.C.

Decaying memorial poles at Kitwancool symbolize the decline of a way of life that, despite some recent resurgence of tribal customs, has little power of survival in the modern world. Beyond them, a new school-house stands for the opportunities of entry into a non-Indian environment which, already large, will increase when the Coast Indians attain a fully equal status as citizens of Canada

poles, are pathetically lacking in the imaginative vigour and technical sufficiency of the past, while the potlatch, translated into a modern context, has become vulgarized and inappropriate. The resurgence of past customs is significant only as a sign of growing self-consciousness. A more radical manifestation is to be found in the movement to bring Indians into an active part in general Canadian life. Indians now have votes in the Provincial elections, and have sent at least one of their own people to the Legislative Assembly, while the cooperatives are slowly spreading up the coast. But where this new self-consciousness is shown most clearly is in the clash that appears between old and new generations over some of the fundamental points of tribal life. Many younger people, attracted by life outside, have left the reservations and taken work that brings them into a non-Indian environment and quickly detaches them from the tribal pattern of living. In my own area there are two small reservations of Salish Indians; one is now uninhabited, the other has two families. The rest of this once numerous band have dispersed over the past thirty years, moving into the fishing and logging camps, intermarrying with whites and half-breeds, and quickly losing their links with the native culture. Many Indian children, after being educated in the reservation schools, go on to the general High Schools and some reach the University. And even among those who stay in the reservations conflicts arise, particularly over marriage. Most of the older generation still hold firmly to exogamy and to the system of marriages arranged between parents. The young, in schools and cinemas, have learnt romantic love, which has no respect for phratric restrictions, and this development is a potent factor in disintegrating what remains of the traditional tribal and inter-tribal patterns.

Everywhere the efforts of the older people to revive their past seem pathetic and inappropriate, and it looks as though, even if the Canadian government does not quickly grant reservation Indians that equal status—in



Provincial Museum, Victoria,

Time has almost erased the ferocity of expression and crisp detail of the carvings on this fallen memorial pole

Federal (as distinct from Provincial) citizenship, in more direct administration of their own affairs and in better-organized public welfare schemes—which justice demands, the problem may well be solved naturally by more and more younger Indians being absorbed into the activities of the outer world. This is not necessarily a desirable solution; one might prefer to see the Indians making a characteristic contribution to the society in which they live. That, however, is unlikely, for their artistic activity has already died down to a lame imitation of the past, and experience shows that attempts to revive or even to adapt primitive cultures in foreign environments are almost invariably unsuccessful.

Samba Schools



of Rio

At the height of Rio's carnival, the crazy laughter dies, the whirling crowd is stilled. Under the fairy-lights of the Avenida Presidente Vargas the pleasure-seekers await the supreme moment of the whole festivity—the parade of the Samba Schools, the dance-clubs of Rio's slum-dwellers

by A. L. LLOYD

Photographs by LEONTI PLANSKOY

PERHAPS the samba, more than anything else, is responsible for our illusions about Rio. We switch on our radios and hear the seeds rattling in the calabash and the muted trumpet sketching the outline of a samba tune, and the dream possesses us of moonlight over the bay, electric signs among the palms, a flood of lovely women (or lovely men), and cars darting like jewelled flies past hotels that are vast palaces of crystal. Now, that is not Rio, though the city contains all those things. The true Rio is otherwise, and none knows that better than the men who make the sambas, though it seems they rarely care to speak their minds.

A great part of Rio's character is in the sharp contrast between rich and poor, learned and unlettered, the urbane and the barbarous. It is typical of the city that some of the *morros*, the hill-slums, rise straight off the imposing main streets of the city centre, and from her rickety shack the Negro washer-woman may look down at evening on the most

beautiful skyscrapers in the world.

The hills of Rio are steep, and the way to the slums leads up long flights of steps, stone steps that become wooden stairways that become mere footholds dug in the red mud. Respectable citizens rarely set foot in the Favela, the Salgueiro, the Kerozene, the Mangueira, yet these are as important to Rio as the Lambeth Walk and the Elephant are to London, and it has been said that the essence of the City of Marvels is to be found in its hill-slums. Certainly the *morros* are the laboratory of the

The Samba was born in the morros, the hill-side slums of Rio, such as the Morro Santo Antonio (opposite), which is within earshot of the city's strident main street, Avenida Rio Branco. Dock-labourers, coming home along the steep alleys of the morro, whistle home-made tunes which, in a year's time, may sweep the world and make an eavesdropper's fortune





(Above) Many of the women of Rio's hill-slums earn their living as washerwomen. Though the glittering metropolis may lie just at the foot of the hill, amenities are few in the morros except for (opposite) the Samba Schools, which attract thousands of members nightly all the year round





The Samba at home. As Rio's proletariat have it, the dance is at a half-way stage between its African jungle origin and its European ballroom destination. In the Samba Schools—which are essentially clubs, and not academies—only one couple takes the floor at a time. Each partner offers a show of skill and fantasy, and then retires, lightly kicking an onlooker, who will then start dancing in his or her turn. The best woman dancer is appointed the club's standard-bearer



In the Rio slums, the throbbing samba music is made by percussion and voice alone. As in African music, melody is secondary, a mere accompaniment to rhythm. A variety of instruments, beaten, shaken and scraped, provide the tune which may be the hit of next year's carnival. Prominent in the samba orchestra is the reso-reso, or scraper. Stone-Age man played such an instrument, made of notched deer-horn. Our young virtuoso has a modern version—a door-spring in a tin box

The aims and hopes of thousands of Negroes are centred on the Rio carnival. It is for the carnival that the new samba-tunes are made, the new samba-steps rehearsed. Night after night, the discussion is pursued by members of the Samba Schools: What are this year's costumes to be? Who is to make them? Above all, who is to wear them for the honour of the school?





Supreme moment for a Rio slum girl is to be acclaimed Carnival Queen by one of the great Samba Schools. She need not be the best dancer. But she must be elegant. Samba Schools have great voting power and are much courted by politicians. Many are fiercely nationalistic, and make a great show of the Brazilian flag and the country's motto: Order and Progress



It is Carnival in Rio. The Negroes are down from the hills. The Negroes have taken the city by storm. In costumes designed to illustrate the glories of Brazil's past—costumes that represent a year's savings—the girls from the Samba Schools dance in resplendent Avenida Presidente Vargas

only widely-known spiritual product of Brazil—the samba.

The people of the morros are true 20th-century urban proletarians; but in the way they cook, the tales they tell, the beliefs they hold, they are deeply influenced by African culture; and in its roots their characteristic dance, the samba, is African too. Brazil boasts that it has no colour-bar, and the assertion is roughly true; but colour-bar or not, it is notable that the poorest persons in Rio generally have the blackest skins, and most of the inhabitants of the morros are Negroes.

Negro slaves came early to Brazil, in large numbers. And despite the Brazilians' enthusiasm for intermarriage, which has resulted in a fantastic mixture of ethnic types, despite also the enormous scale on which West European culture has been promoted, particularly in the cities, nevertheless African physical types and African culture-traits have shown remarkable persistence, especially among poor-class Brazilians living in the old slave-labour belt from Recife to Rio and across to São Paulo.

The most spectacular of African culture-survivals are the religious ceremonies called *candombles* in Bahia and *macumbas* in Rio. At these ceremonies the deities of the African Slave Coast are worshipped. The ritual is marked by frenzied drumming and it is customary for some of the faithful to be excited into cataleptic fits. For many slum-dwellers, the cults are the only type of social organization at hand, and the only form of emotional release from their day-to-day frustrations.

Perhaps, though, one should already begin to speak of the macumbas in the past tense, for though the cults still flourish in Bahia, in Rio they are now very shabby affairs, with few devotees and many disgusting fakes set on fleecing the tourists. As a social force in the morros, the macumba has been gradually superseded by the Samba School.

The term requires some explanation. A Samba School is a dance-club, not an academy. One goes there, not to learn to dance, but to meet one's friends and exhibit one's skill. The word 'school' is used as gamblers speak of a 'poker school'. The Samba Schools vary in power and grandeur. Some are tiny clubs, with perhaps a score of members meeting in a shack. Others, such as the school in the industrial suburb of Portela, may have 5000 members and meet in a neon-lit hall, and be heavily subsidized by politicians in search of votes (from time to time, there is an unseemly scramble for the Samba School vote, in which churchmen, trade unionists and racketeers

may all take part).

Let us visit a modest Samba School. The room is long and low. Naked electric-light bulbs hang among dusty paper garlands. At the far end of the room are the musicians, all of them percussion players—two elderly drummers, a young tambourine player in a Hawaiian flowered shirt, and two little boys pot-bellied from a diet of black beans and rice. One of the boys agitates a cylindrical biscuit-tin containing a handful of tintacks, while the other scrapes a notched stick called a *reco-reco*, one of the oldest and, in primitive societies, most venerated of all instruments. The sound is dry, insect-like, barely perceptible yet irritatingly pervasive.

Round the walls, the members sit on benches or stand with folded arms—laundresses, cooks and little servant girls, dockers, road labourers, soldiers on leave. They talk quietly among themselves. Some rather aimlessly follow the song which the *mestre de armonia* has struck up to accompany the little boys' rhythm. Suddenly the scene comes to life. The drums break into a thunder of two-four time, the voices quicken, the harmonies fill out, the muscles and nerves of the audience begin to quiver, and the samba master calls the first couple on to the floor.

Carnival time in Rio is the season when the Samba Schools really blossom. Often the themes have a nationalistic or ideological tang—The Glories of the Brazilian Past allows dockers to put on satin knee-breeches, and laundresses to wear silk crinolines; Vargas the Great School-teacher is a theme that gives full rein to fantasy; Brazil Was Built on the Muscle of the Negro provides for a dramatic treatment of men in chains, or bearing hammers, or dancing with a miner's lamp on the forehead and a firework in each hand.

In Roman times, during the Saturnalia, the slaves became masters and the world was turned upside-down. At Carnival time in Rio, the Samba School Negroes come down from the hills and take over the city. In a pride of silk and artificial pearls they dance along the festooned main avenues of the metropolis. The whole city is shaken by the thunder of their drums and the roar of their singing. Under the illuminations, the thousands of black faces have a golden shine, and as the Samba Schools dance, a battery of fireworks rises in the sky and bursts in a shower of glory. But the triumph of the under-dog, of the morro-dweller and the samba-maker, is a brief affair. To their dismay, the darkness reasserts itself immediately.

India's Own Revolution

by JOHN SEYMOUR

During nearly a year spent in travelling about India, the writer observed that, owing partly to the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, and even more to the natural inclinations of the Indian people, a strong resistance is being shown to 'progress' along the lines which lead to the classical Western Industrial Revolution, as well as to the widespread mechanization of agriculture. He formed the opinion that a compromise will be achieved between the two extremes of the Gandhian hand spinning-wheel on the one hand, and the giant factories and industrial slums of the West on the other. Readers will welcome his book Round About India, published this month by Eyre and Spottiswoode

I MET Sri Chaubbi when I was travelling on the train through Madhya Pradesh, or what used to be known as the Central Provinces. I could see that he was a Congressman by his clothes, which were of *khadi*, or hand-spun and hand-woven cloth. The cloth was not the usual white cotton of that part of India, but a greyish mixture, and cut into tunic and trousers to Sri Chaubbi's own rather strange design. He was a huge man, with a big moustache like that of the late Marshal Stalin, and he was so bubbling over with high spirits and enthusiasm that I was captivated by him immediately.

"You are stopping at Wardha?" he rumbled at me, when he heard that I was travelling around having a look at his country. I told him that I was not—I was going straight on to Allahabad. "What!" he exclaimed. "Not stopping at Wardha? Not seeing Sevagram? You must already have been seeing it, I think?"

When I told him that I had not even known that Sevagram was in that vicinity he appeared deeply shocked.

"Not known where is the *ashram* of the Father of the Nation?" He told me that he would pull me off the train at Wardha, if necessary by force, and that I should honour his humble abode for a few days, and pay a visit to the ashram of the Father of the Nation. By the Father of the Nation, of course, he meant the late Mahatma Gandhi.

Now I had seen plenty of what might be called the cult of Mahatma Gandhi in other parts of India, and I had found certain aspects of it rather incomprehensible. The insistence on hand-spinning was one of them. All over India I had found places where people were being taught to spin and weave by hand: to produce very small quantities of cloth in a very long time.

The khadi, or hand-spun cloth, movement, one had believed, had been started before In-

dependence to embarrass the British. If every Indian could grow, spin and weave his own cotton, India would no longer be dependent on Lancashire and would have a better chance of throwing off the bonds of imperialism. But as I got further into India I found that the cult of khadi goes very much deeper than that. Since Independence, in fact, it has increased by leaps and bounds. It is a revolt against large-scale industrialism.

At Wardha, after having "honoured" Sri Chaubbi's "humble abode" (he was a minor railway official) I was taken to see the settlement which has grown up near the little village of Sevagram, at which the Mahatma established his last ashram. (The best way I can devise of explaining an ashram to the Western reader is to say that it is a cross between a 'Summer School' and a permanent camp. It is a settlement formed by a group of people in order to be near a teacher or leader.)

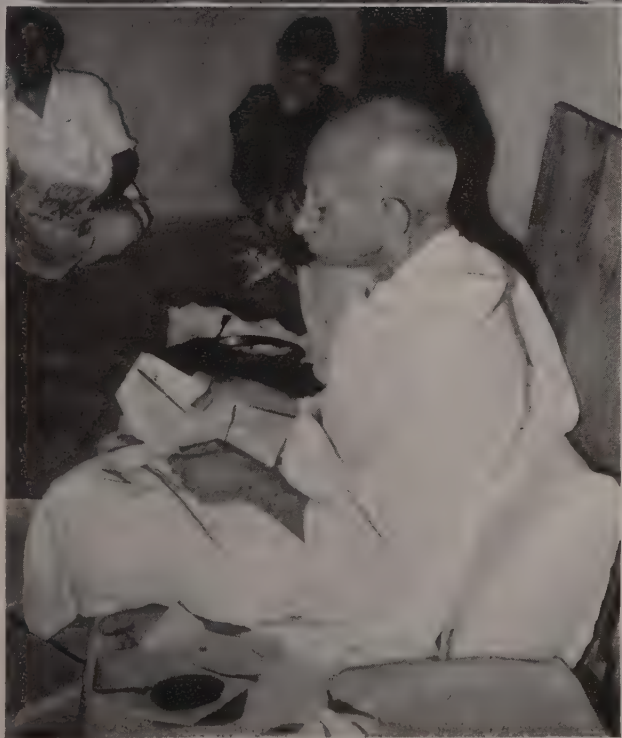
From the little town of Wardha we cycled over a scrub-covered plain, in intense heat, until we came to a sprawling settlement of wattle-and-daub bungalows, standing among very attractive gardens and farmland. First we visited the Khadi Development Centre, and saw research being carried out to discover better ways of processing cotton and making one's own cloth by hand. We saw the various kinds of old-fashioned Indian spinning-wheels and also the improved portable wheel, invented by the Mahatma's son, which can fold up and be carried comfortably under the arm, and which only costs thirty rupees to buy. All this was not new to me, for I had been shown such machines wherever I had been in India. We were also shown various types of flying-shuttle looms, hand ginning-machines, carding-bows and other apparatus, and different methods of dyeing and finishing cloth, and printing it by means of hand blocks.

From there we went to the original ashram, where I was surprised to find myself being in-



Camera Press

Mahatma Gandhi's ideal of the good life is symbolized by his hut, which is preserved just as it was when he died. "Civilized simplicity" is the keynote: to enable a man to realize his potentialities to the full, he requires few possessions beyond a roof, a bed, a well, a latrine and a stove. He ought to weave his own clothes and till his own field; he needs neither machines nor machine-made goods. The cleavage between this view of life and the one that insists on industrialization as the means of attaining material prosperity is perhaps one of the most fundamental problems in India today. (Right) "The Father of the Nation" in his simple clothes of homespun



Camera Press



The campaign for hand-woven cloth or khadi was inaugurated by Gandhi in an attempt to lead his compatriots away from the spiritual and material dangers of industrialism. For centuries cotton has been spun in much the same way: first the seeds are removed, then the fibres are fluffed up by the carding-bow (above). The string of the bow is plucked by the wooden rod held in the operator's right hand, and is dipped into the cotton while still vibrating. Next, the carded cotton is rolled into shapes convenient for spinning (right); and finally it is spun, often on one of the portable spinning-wheels (below) that were invented by a son of the Mahatma. These, which are extremely cheap to buy, are gradually replacing the old-fashioned charkha, or village spinning-wheel



roduced to a charming Yorkshire girl who was wearing a sari. Her name was Marjorie Sykes, and she was, I was told, the Principal of the Teachers' Training College which has been established at Sevagram—to which students are sent by the State governments from every part of India. Later I found that she is a leading authority on the system of education, which is spreading rapidly across India, known as Basic Education.

Basic Education was invented by Mahatma Gandhi to take the place of ordinary schooling up to the secondary stage. The principle of it is that children should be taught through handicrafts. There was a Basic school at Sevagram, attended by children from the surrounding villages, and used to a certain extent as a training-ground for the embryo teachers at the Training School. Marjorie Sykes took me round it, and showed me something of the way in which Basic Education works.

Some very small children in one class were sitting on the floor preparing to spin cotton. One child was weighing the raw material and the teacher interrupted her to conduct a small extempore arithmetic lesson on the blackboard. How many hanks of spun-yarn could you expect from a *maund* of raw cotton?—work out then how many hanks you could expect from a ton. The practical job of spinning was interrupted for perhaps a quarter of an hour while this enquiry went on, attended by great enthusiasm on the part of the children; then interest in arithmetic waned and the children got down to the intricacies of spinning.

"Our principle is," said Marjorie Sykes, "never to try to teach them anything until their interest has been aroused in it. We wait until they want to know—and then we enable them to find out."

We went to a class of much older children, who were learning to operate a kind of loom which originated in Burma. Their weaving was being held up by a geography lesson. One of them had asked what Burma was like; the teacher had told them what he knew; another child had asked what lay the other side of Burma; and a discussion was going on which eventually embraced the whole of Indo-China and necessitated maps being sent for from the school library.

It is necessary to describe this Basic Education at some length, because it is the means by which the Gandhian philosophy is being spread about India.

The Mahatma devised the system to counteract "babuism", or the cult of the clerical job. He wished to bring children up in the belief that to labour with one's hands is digni-

fied, and a better way of passing one's time than sitting at a desk, labouring neither with one's hands nor with one's brains. But also he wished to inculcate in them his own ideas of "civilized simplicity", and the superiority of handicrafts over mass production.

I was then introduced to some people who were working in a field, some ploughing with oxen, and some winding water up from a well for irrigation. They proved to be a group of enthusiasts who were making the experiment of being entirely self-supporting. They were succeeding well enough in regard to food, but not entirely with other things. "We had to buy a cheap hurricane lamp the other day," said one, in good English. "We have converted it to burn the oil we crush from our own oil-seed. But we would have liked to have made the lamp ourselves."

I asked them what was the point of their enterprise, and they said that it was just an experiment, in order to show that it could be done. Gandhiji had taught that the village should be as nearly as possible self-supporting, so that the villager could be independent of the townsman and free from exploitation.

The last thing I was shown was the Mahatma's dwelling-hut, which has been preserved exactly as it was when Gandhiji last left it. There was the Mahatma's living-room, with its clean-swept mud-and-cow-dung floor, completely bare except for the bed: the latter a raised hard mud platform in one corner with a pillow and a length of white cloth on it. Beside the bed were a few books: a Bible and an English translation of *Baghavad Gita* among them, and under the books sat a little stone carving of the Three Wise Monkeys, which for some reason or other had taken the Mahatma's fancy. In one corner of the room leant the famous walking-staff, and under it the wooden sandals—each with a peg to hold between the toes—on which Gandhi walked so many thousands of miles along the roads of India.

"Civilized simplicity," said Sri Chaubbi to me. "If a man clutters his life up with many gadgets he cannot be really civilized. We must live simply—and our thoughts should be high. Thought is what matters, not gadgets and property. Here are all the necessities for the bodily needs: a bed to sleep on, a well out there to bathe at, a latrine for the disposal of the bodily excreta, and a kitchen at which simple vegetarian food can be prepared. There is nothing more which one can add to the well-being of the body than what you see in this hut!"

Be that as it may, we mounted our bicycles



John Seymour

Villagers in the Punjab, with the leisurely help of an ox, manufacture gorr, an unrefined sugar, by boiling the juice of cane ground in a primitive mill. It is no more difficult to make than—

(products of the Machine Age) and rode back to Wardha. There the indefatigable Chaubbi took me to another training school—a place financed by the government at which young men and women could learn various village handicrafts. We saw a paper factory, in which the only non-human motive power was a bull walking in a circle. There was certainly nothing wrong with the resulting paper, but it took a long time to make. One can hardly imagine a journal such as *The News of the World*, for example, being supplied with newsprint from such a source. We saw a pottery, a soap factory, a bull-powered oil-mill, and carpenter's and other handicraft shops.

After this we returned to Sri Chaubbi's bungalow, and, together with several other people who dropped in, we had an argument.

Now the argument that we engaged in was one which I heard in every part of India that I visited. So far as India is concerned, this is the Great Debate. The argument between the

Communists and the Capitalists fades into insignificance beside it.

The station master, who was with us, said that the hand-loom industry could never compete with the big mills. Gandhiji was the Father of the Nation, and every Indian should revere his memory, but this idea of his of home-spun, and self-sufficiency, and simple living, while a good idea in theory, was impossible in practice. There must be progress.

With us was an ardent young man, a student at the Wardha training school, and he said: "Progress to what? There can be many sorts of progress. Progress to better things and progress to worse. Progress to simple living and progress to more complicated living."

The station master said: "But India is poor. Her people are hungry. We can only cure our poverty and our hunger by mechanizing our agriculture, and by building large factories."

The student said that mechanization of

agriculture did not grow more food. He admitted that it enabled the same amount of food to be grown by fewer people, but it did not grow more food. An acre ploughed by oxen—provided it was ploughed deeply enough—produced as much food as an acre ploughed by a tractor. A little more actually, because of the dung of the oxen. All the tractor did was to turn people off the land and force them into the cities where they became part of the industrial proletariat: machine-minders and half-men.

The station master said that this was necessary: it had happened in all the Western countries, and if India wanted to become like America, and have refrigerators and television-sets, then there must be this industrial revolution. The student answered that India did not wish to become like America, and could well do without refrigerators and television, and that if the teachings of Gandhiji were followed hunger could be abolished very quickly.

—the chatties thumped into shape by a potter using a wooden bowl as a mould. Such simple village products as these, paid for in kind, can provide the community with nearly all its requirements

Now I do not wish to give the impression that it was only at Wardha, which of course has become a place of pilgrimage for the disciples of Gandhi, that I ran upon this anti-industrialism movement. India is full of it.

Wherever I went I was shown khadi centres, run by the State governments to show people how to spin and weave, to issue out raw cotton and collect spun-yarn for passing on to the weavers. In every district I saw small village industries being fostered, and small village industrial cooperatives being operated. Nobody in India disputes the fact that large industry is more 'efficient' at production than small industry; but it is considered by the followers of Gandhi—which term probably includes the majority of Indians—that *small* industry is more efficient at producing human happiness.

The Congress Party, which after all has an overwhelming majority in the Central Government, is officially committed to the encouragement of handicrafts, and also of Basic Education. No Congress politician, the length and





John Seymour

The Indian Government, while encouraging the self-help policy of Gandhi's disciples, has also promoted, with American support, the Community Projects scheme, designed to improve living standards largely by increased mechanization. (Above) The Nilokherri training college for Community Project Officers. (Below) Many of them are civil servants who, among their new duties, now do manual labour

John Seymour





John Sey

Two ways in which the Community Projects scheme brings help to the villagers. (Above) Many deep-well turbine pumps are being installed for irrigation on land only recently reclaimed from the jungle. (Below) A tractor in a Punjab village. The increased mechanization urged by the scheme is opposed by Gandhi's disciples as well as by village folk, who regard all machinery with profound suspicion

John Sey



breadth of India, would dare to make a speech of any importance without paying at least one tribute to the Father of the Nation. Mahatma Gandhi still looms over India like a colossus. And while I was in India a law was passed severely limiting the amount of cloth which could be made in the mills, in order to encourage the hand-loom weaver. The big mill-owner is more afraid of this tendency to support by legislation the hand-loom weaver than he is of Communism.

But politicians are realists and, while paying lip-service to the idea of handicrafts, many of them are in fact encouraging quite the opposite. Many a Congress statesman dresses in khadi (although not perhaps khadi spun and woven by his own hands) but in his policy encourages the establishment in India of big industries. *Dare* a government, in a land as poor as India is, refuse what big industry has to offer? The big machines are needed to build the irrigation and hydro-electric dams which are changing the face of India, to produce the artificial fertilizer needed to grow

heavier crops, to mine the coal which is to take the place of the cow-dung now burnt on all the cooking-fires of India (and thus to release the cow-dung for its proper job: to go back into the land and produce more food).

It was such considerations which persuaded Pandit Nehru to institute the Community Projects scheme, which was officially opened on Mahatma Gandhi's birthday last year, October 2, 1952.

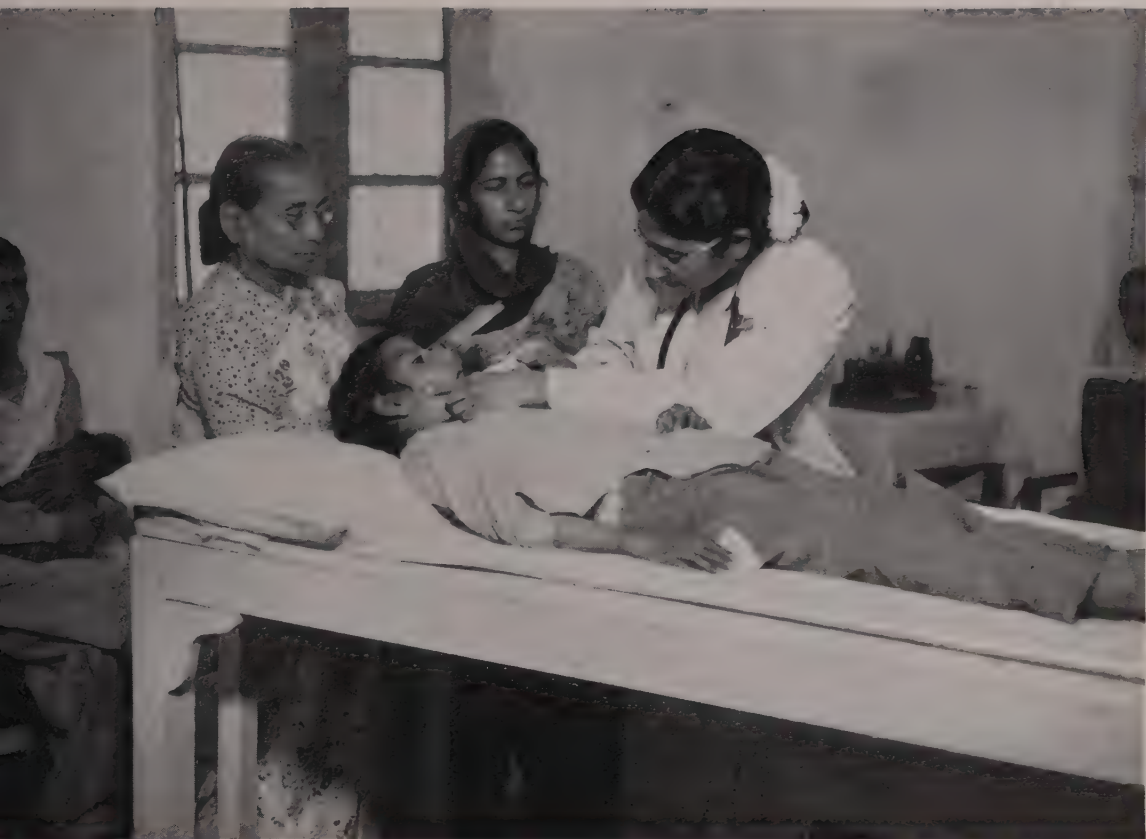
I met a man in New Delhi who asked me to drive with him to a place called Nilokherri. Having no idea what Nilokherri was I said I would go, just to please him, and discovered that it was one of the refugee settlements formed to house and give work to the refugees from Pakistan. But it was not Nilokherri that we were going to see. It was a school that had been set up there to train Community Project Officers.

The purpose of the Community Projects scheme was to select, initially, seventy-five areas of land in seventy-five different parts of India, each area to comprise several hundred

With American aid India has constructed such large industrial works as this chemical fertilizer plant in Bihar; but, though politicians approve of them, villagers dislike using their products



By courtesy of the United States Information Service



By courtesy of the United States Information Service

On the other hand country folk welcome certain improvements: among them the work of health centres, also receiving assistance from America, which includes the medical examination of children

villages, and by expending a great deal of money and energy on them, to improve them all along the line: in agriculture, education, communications, health, housing, social services, everything.

At first the United States government was to supply half the money, but since the scheme's inception this proportion has been severely reduced. Mr Chester Bowles, who was at that time United States Ambassador to India, had taken a great interest in the scheme and it was largely planned by American experts, but since Mr Chester Bowles' recall the United States has taken less interest in it. But originally emphasis was to be placed on many things which are the antithesis of Mahatma Gandhi's ideas: mechanization of agriculture being the most important.

When my friend drove back to Delhi I did not go with him. For one of the students pointed out that there was a spare bed in his dormitory, and suggested that I should stay on until the end of the course as a sort of honorary student.

There were seventy-five students there—one for each of the Project Areas—and they came from every hole and corner of India. They were all educated men: the language they used was English; most of them had been civil servants; and during the four or five days that I stayed there I heard discussed and threshed out all the problems of every part of India.

Our day started at half-past five, when we drank some tea and tumbled into lorries to be driven out to various villages. There we spent a few hours working hard with picks and shovels (to the delight of the villagers) at doing those jobs which one wonders why the villagers had not done for themselves many years ago. Such things as filling in mosquito-breeding spoil-pits, repairing wells, draining the streets (which at that monsoon time were quagmires), preparing volley-ball pitches for the children. After this we packed into the lorries again and were driven back to Nilo-kerri.

There we were subjected to lectures for the



John Seymour



By courtesy of Coca-Cola Overseas Magazine

A panchayat or council of five in a small hamlet. These are the people who resist most obstinately the Community Project plans but they are the material with which the would-be reformer has to work. They take some convincing that, rather than drink the milk they produce, it is better to sell it in order to be able to buy, for example, Coca-Cola, as do (left) their city compatriots



John Seymour

The Madras Firka Development Plan constitutes a compromise. Though linked with the khadi movement, it recognizes that some kinds of machinery can make life better for men. (Above) A small-scale irrigation dam built under the Firka scheme. A similar compromise is represented by simple agricultural implements: (right) an American-designed seed distributor, to be drawn by bullocks



By courtesy of the United States Information Service

rest of the day. Every possible aspect of the Project work was covered, from the effects of deep ploughing to the training of midwives. Several American "Agricultural Extension Officers" came from time to time to talk to us about scientific agriculture.

Later I lived for some time in a village in one of the Project Areas, in the Punjab, after the scheme had been in operation for a few months, and I saw something of the carrying-out in practice of the idea. I saw deep-well turbines being installed to provide water for irrigation, farmers being exhorted and helped to buy tractors and farm machinery, motor-roads being built, artificial fertilizers being supplied: all things which cost a lot of money and made extensive use of imported materials.

But it soon became obvious to me that the main effect of the scheme would be otherwise than its instigators intended. The villagers were not so keen to be mechanized. They welcomed certain improvements: the trained midwives and health visitors, the new schools, the paving of the village streets, the livestock improvement, the increased irrigation. But they rejected many of the other ideas. They were not too keen, for example, on tractor ploughing. They thought that on their land it might lead to wind erosion.

One of the American Extension Officers came to our village to talk to us about starting a milk-marketing scheme. Milk was to be collected, and sent to Delhi for sale.

One of the farmers said: "But we drink our milk ourselves. We don't want to sell it."

The expert said: "If you sell your milk you'll be able to buy other things—tea and Coca-Cola, and drink them instead."

After a silence another old small-holder replied: "We prefer to drink milk."

And that was the end of the milk-marketing scheme.

Now I gained the impression that India will progress along a road which is a compromise between the Gandhian anti-machinery cult and the Western idea of Industrial Revolution.

In the State of Madras I saw in action what I believe to be this compromise.

Since October 1947 (it also started on Mahatma Gandhi's birthday) the Madras government has been operating what it calls its Firka Development Plan. (A *firka* is a sub-unit of a district.) I spent a couple of weeks riding round one of the development *firkas* on the back of the Development Officer's motor-bicycle.

Excepting for the fact that it was to a greater extent government-inspired and aided,

this scheme reminded me of the Rural Development Movement in Ceylon. There were the community centres in every village (built by the villagers themselves, but with a little financial help from the government), reading rooms and libraries, the government-supplied wireless-sets, the exhortations to improve living and agriculture. There was in addition the classic Gandhi-inspired spinning movement: an extensive system of khadi centres in the villages.

But the very practical people who were running the scheme were moving in a direction of their own. They were not averse to using machines, if machines could help them without interfering too much with their lives.

For example I saw a cooperatively-run village ginnery, with a motor-driven ginning and carding machine, to provide prepared cotton for the spinners. I saw a small weaving mill, cooperatively run by some villagers, with looms driven by electricity. The mill, I was told, only operated when work on the land was slack. All along the banks of the Kistna river I saw electric pump-sets operating, or being installed, to pump water out of the river for irrigation. These pumps had been paid for by loans from the government to small groups of farmers on whose land the water was to be used. I saw a government training centre in a small town, where young men were being taught to use such things as small electric stitching-machines for shoe-making, electric sewing-machines, power-lathes for metal and wood turning, or where they were learning to service and repair tractors and other machinery.

The policy seemed to be one of compromise. Avoid, at all costs, the Western-style Industrial Revolution with its depopulation of the countryside, its rush to the cities, its emphasis on production of material objects for production's sake. But make use of machinery and division of labour on a small and humane scale where these things will obviously lighten the necessary burden. It is absurd to sit for many hours a day throughout the year twiddling a spinning-wheel in order to produce just enough cloth to clothe oneself with—when on an electric spinning-jenny in the village one could do the job in a few hours a year.

But it is equally absurd, a great many people in India will tell you, to leave your village and go and live in an industrial city and stand for eight hours a day in a noisy factory—just so that you can have the money to buy a lot of articles that you could perfectly well do without.

Change in Romney Marsh

by GERALD H. HONES

LADEN with two cars and their passengers, the Silver City Airways' freighter aircraft lumbered away from the dew-covered grass of Lympne airport, climbing steadily as, below, the land dropped 300 feet to the flat levels of Romney Marsh. The old cliff line, cut back by the sea long before the silting of the Marsh began, was completely enveloped in a shroud of mist that December morning, but as we peered through the cabin windows the mosaic of the Marsh landscape was clearly spread out below—a patchwork of brown and green, winding roads, saturated fields with pools of water bearing witness to the winter's rainfall, and the drainage dykes, full and glistening in the sunlight.

So distinctively individual in character that Thomas Ingoldsby named it the "fifth quarter" of the globe, Romney Marsh, like so many other peninsulas, reflects a close relationship between man, land and sea. The independent spirit engendered in such environments coupled with a relatively isolated position has, moreover, maintained steady resistance to the changes of the modern world. But, as in Brittany or Cornwall, change has been inevitable and the landscape of today is a complex pattern of old and new features in close juxtaposition.

Evidences still abound of the real underlying character of the Marsh and its people, clearly visible throughout the superimposed mantle of more modern landscape-patterns. Thousands of holidaymakers motoring through have found the intricate maze of Marsh roads both confusing and certain to cause delay. This irregular road-network, never intended to cope with the huge stream of summer coastal traffic, has merely developed from the old meandering sheep-tracks, their routes determined by the pattern of old drainage-channels, or dykes. Furthermore, in many instances, these dykes were originally the channels of small rivulets winding their way across the alluvium in an attempt to drain seaward by the easiest route.

Not only the streams and dykes turn seaward. Ever since the first small section of the marshland was "inned" (or completely enclosed by a protecting wall in order to reclaim land) by the Romans—some say the Belgae

the successive inhabitants have anxiously faced seaward, realizing that the sea is always liable to challenge their right of control over the land.

In the first place it was the sea which began the formation of Romney Marsh, depositing a long shingle ridge built of material eroded from the coast to the west and creating a lagoon. Rivers such as the Rother then partly filled this with sediment, and after a long complicated history of uplift and submergence, man began to influence the landscape. The original major protecting bank, the Rhee wall, its site now marked by the main road from New Romney to Appledore, "inned" the true Romney Marsh, and later the Dymchurch wall was built on the south-eastern side. The other areas, like the Walland and Denge Marshes, which constitute the remainder of the region known popularly as "Romney Marsh", were reclaimed at later dates and gradually added to the original land.

The original Dymchurch wall was described on an early 17th-century map as "Armed and Fenced against the rage and wash of the sea by Bushes and Faggotts of Thorne fastened to the said wall by Oken Stakes called Needles and Groyne, or knocks of Piles continually maintained at the charge of the whole levell" of Romney Marsh. For hundreds of years the wall was of that fashion, bundles of thorn faggots being kept in reserve for the emergency repairs so often necessary, until, gradually, newer methods were adopted, using stone as the basic material. The present wall—with its broad top and gently curved stone 'apron' facing the sea, its cross-section so designed to prevent waves breaking on top of, and over, the wall—is a most imposing bulwark of sea defence, but even this creation of modern constructional engineering has proved unable to prevent the sea from occasionally damaging the marshland behind.

Powerful winds and high seas in the storms during December 1951 and the following January badly damaged the outer apron near Dymchurch, while forcing half a mile of the retaining bank behind the wall to collapse and block the main coast road. Only prompt, makeshift repairs prevented the serious breach



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Ever since Romney Marsh was first reclaimed in the days of the Romans or even earlier there has been a constant struggle to keep the sea from breaking through. (Above) A breach caused by storm in the sea-wall at Dymchurch, where (below) the old marshland tidal outfall is being reconstructed

Fullers Photo News Service



that is so feared on the Marsh. The temporary work of that winter—when tons of rock, broken concrete and sandbags filled with mud were dropped in the gap by a hastily summoned labour force, including Servicemen—was replaced in the summer by a permanent construction of rock facing, concrete bastions and a solid backing of heavy clay, held by a strong retaining wall flanking the main road. The Dymchurch wall may have changed its outward look but its major purpose is the same as in the Middle Ages, and the sea is as powerful an enemy as ever.

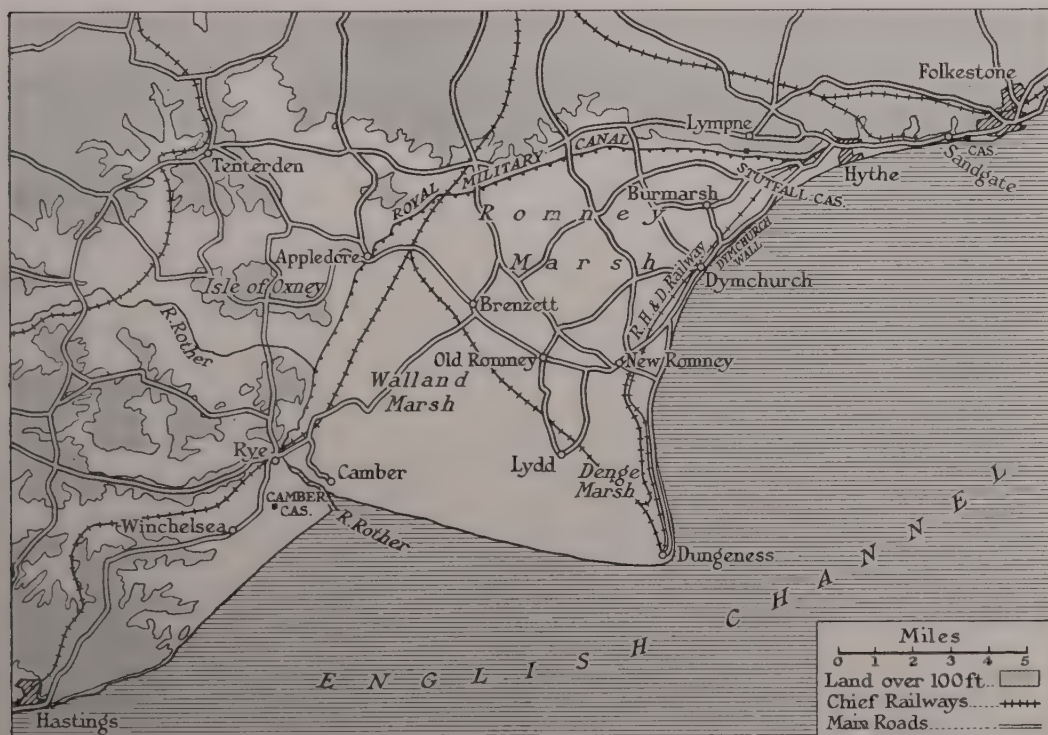
Not only has the sea-wall been used for defence against the sea. Dominating the flat levels are defensive works of another kind, again facing seaward, reminders of past threats of invasion.

Oldest are the two fine castles at Sandgate and Camber, both resulting from the Tudor improvements in the defences along the English coast from Tilbury to the Scilly Isles. Surrounded on three sides by the closely packed houses of Sandgate, clustering together at the foot of the old cliff line just by the north-east edge of the Marsh, Sandgate Castle has been sorely battered by recent storms. Much of its frontage has been undermined and partially broken, but the new coastal defence works now being extended along the

beach are designed to give complete protection. Camber, a more typical example of Henry VIII's "artillery forts", with central citadel, ring of semicircular casemates and surrounding moat, lies to the south-west, dominating the shingle between Rye and Dungeness.

Dating from the later threats of Napoleon are the Martello towers (built in 1804) which stand on, or near, the sea-wall and were described by Cobbett, in his *Rural Rides*, as "ridiculous things". Along the landward edge of the Marsh, the Royal Military Canal was another product of the Napoleonic wars' defensive system, the straight tree-lined banks providing a striking contrast to the irregular wanderings of the rest of the Marsh waterways. Today, fishermen use the placid waters while at its eastern end, where it passes through the old Cinque Port of Hythe, the Canal is the scene of carnival gaiety each year with the gaily decorated boats of the "Venetian Fete".

The social landscape of the Marsh has also undergone considerable change despite the natural rigidity of peninsular ideas. The old houses are still to be found, in village and farm, as in the charm of the streets in New Romney, but there is also a new architecture, illustrated in the more recently developed





Sturgesworth Wheeler Studios

Defence against the sea; defence against human invaders. The former is ever the more relentless enemy but the latter have seemed formidable enough for succeeding generations to build castles against them: Stutfall in Roman, Sandgate (above) and Camber (below) in Tudor, Martello towers in Napoleonic times

films Ltd



parts of Dymchurch. Contrasting vividly with neat square farms, or houses with weatherboarding and vertically hung tiles, are the stucco villas with their ornamental gardens which have sprung up so rapidly near the main coastal road. Quiet villages like Burmarsh, with noble church and attractive inn, appropriately enough named "The Shepherd and Crook", have retained more strongly the earlier characteristics which have been almost obliterated in other settlements, often of equivalent age but more accessible to modern influences.

It is not really difficult to see why the interior remains so much more unspoiled than the coastal zone. To anyone not of Marsh stock (and we may naturally take their strong local pride for granted) the very flatness may well prove initially uninteresting. Only those who, having once seen the Marsh—and probably the best introductory view is obtained from the cliff-top of the old shoreline near Lympne, overlooking the whole panorama—were sufficiently attracted by its remote character to examine more closely its distinctive countryside, can ever become aware of its real qualities. The intangible spirit of the region can only be appreciated by leisurely contact, for it takes time to become attuned to its

charms. As a result the casual visitor rarely realizes the character of the true Romney Marsh, and the majority are attracted to the sandy beaches along the eastern shore.

The inevitable, and generally regrettable, result has been the commercialization of the periphery. The miles of sands shelving gently seaward between the wooden groynes, built at right-angles to the sea-wall in order to minimize "longshore drift", form a natural playground for hundreds of holidaymakers. Many of them are visitors for the day only, arriving by car, coach and cycle, and it is largely to meet their needs that Dymchurch, for example, has changed its character. The quiet charm of the old village, with its historic and infamous smuggling record, is now submerged beneath the pattern of the small 20th-century seaside resort—with ice-cream parlours, chrome-fronted shops, litter, teahouses and even a fun-fair. In addition, however, there are those who stay for longer periods and who have played an equal part in transforming the landscape—with the ribbon development of small villas, the trailer-caravan sites, and the bright little chalets of the holiday camp, gregariously huddled around the large central hall.

Further to the south, where the tall striped

Also made to keep Boney in his place was the Royal Military Canal whose grassy tree-lined banks provide 20th-century lovers and fishermen with shady places for their more peaceful occupations

Fullers Photo News Service





T. Edmondson

Romney Marsh has resisted the encroachments of 'civilization' more obstinately than most parts of England, but—at least on its fringes—civilization has won. Bungalows huddle under sea-walls and along the shingle stretching out to Dungeness, caravans line the coast-roads. Yet, inland, there are quiet villages, unspoilt churches standing solitary in fields, twisting lanes by reed-grown dykes. Above The ancient High Street of New Romney. (Below) A Dymchurch holiday camp

Holkneorth Wheeler Studio





Halksworth Wheeler Studios

The 15-inch-gauge Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway carries thousands of summer visitors each year across the Marsh. Walt Disney here appears in the unfamiliar role of temporary engine-driver

lighthouse of Dungeness overlooks the shingle ridges of the point, there has been somewhat less change. This cusped foreland, its sharp point due to the proximity of the French coast which prevents any large wave development from the south-east, although remaining relatively isolated for much of the year, has a fair quota of summer visitors, many brought by the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway, "The World's Smallest Public Railway". This unique little railway, with its 15-inch gauge, has carried millions of passengers since its opening in 1927, and is a constant source of attraction to railway enthusiasts.

As the railway line also follows a route that is mainly coastal, its passengers, like the motorists, see little of the interior and remain unaware of the sweeping changes that are taking place inland. Traditional sheep country, with its own breed known throughout the world, Romney Marsh is fast changing its agricultural outlook.

Of geologically recent formation, the Marsh has undergone many changes of level—there are distinct evidences of an old forest in regions now over thirteen feet below the spring tide high-water mark—and the soil formation has necessarily been most complicated. The

result of the varying activity of rivers, including the Rother when it followed its old course, and the repeated invasion by the sea, is a considerable soil variety, from heavy clay to light sand. The basic soil for the principal "fattening pastures", however, has been the fine soft loams, while the remaining fertile lands have been used as breeding pastures. The rich herbage of perennial rye grass and white clover has long carried up to twelve sheep per acre, a capacity rarely rivalled in Britain, and for centuries this has been noted with awe by travellers. The famous William Cobbett, visiting the Marsh in 1823, wrote: "In quitting this Appledore I crossed a canal and entered on Romney Marsh. This was grassland on both sides of me to a great distance. The flocks and herds immense. The sheep are of a breed that takes its name from the Marsh . . . Very pretty and large . . . the sight is most beautiful." If you visit the Marsh today you can still see large flocks grazing contentedly between the dykes, alongside stately little churches, with the old cliff line silhouetted against the sky in the distance. This familiar scene epitomizes the popular conception of the Marsh, but there have been many changes in the past fifteen years.



Edmondson

Romney Marsh sheep grazing quietly behind Old Romney church: a scene unaltered since Cobbett admired the breed 130 years ago. For hundreds of years the Marsh has been noted for its rich fattening- and breeding-pastures which can carry up to twelve sheep an acre; the immense flocks noted by Cobbett are still to be seen, but as a result of the ploughing-up policy initiated during World War II the sheep population today is several thousand less than it was in 1939, while the acreage of land under the plough is now over seven times as great

That the land when ploughed was wonderfully productive has long been acknowledged. Cobbett, writing in Folkestone, recorded of the area around Old Romney: "I had, for greater part of the way, cornfields on one side of me and grassland on the other. . . . I never saw corn like this before . . . they have here about 800 large, very large, sheaves to an acre. . . . In a garden here I saw some very fine onions, and a prodigious crop; sure sign of most excellent land. . . ." There has always been a small nucleus of arable land but the practice of ploughing was not at all general and it was not until World War II that the acreage under crops grew rapidly. The sheep population of about 180,000 in 1939 declined to under 100,000 in 1948 but has since risen again to 133,000 in 1952, while the area of arable land has risen from under 4000 to 25,000 acres in the same period. The balance of agricultural economy was shifting and the continued extremely high yields—potatoes, for example, have a yield well over twice the national average—seem likely to make the change permanent.

As in many ways the area is very similar to the Fens, it is not surprising that much of the recent agricultural transformation of the Marsh has been the work of farmers moved in from Lincolnshire. Although the local sheep farmers regard it as pure sacrilege, they have ploughed much good pasture land, pastures that have fattened sheep for centuries. Side by side with the old, a new landscape is evolving—extra roads built by farmers to link with public highways, modern farm buildings to store crops or house the newly acquired mechanized equipment, huge glasshouses for tomato growing, fields of golden waving wheat or tulips, and scattered piles of tiled pipes awaiting use. These pipes show how the farmers realize that their main problem is the need to lower the water-table. This is being achieved to some extent by filling in old meandering dykes, cutting more efficient straight ones, and tile-draining whole fields, at a depth of about three feet. This work is inevitably costly but there are larger schemes now being planned by the drainage authorities. Not everyone in the area, it must be

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noted, is in favour of such drainage for those who still have large areas of permanent pasture prefer to keep their land moist by preserving a high water level, at times even damming dykes with wooden "boards" to make sure.

The agricultural future of the Marsh, however, seems to lie in a carefully integrated system in which both sheep and arable farming will play a complementary role. The Report of an Agricultural Land Commission which, in 1948, investigated the agricultural use of Romney Marsh recommended that ley farming is the proper system for general adoption "to ensure full and efficient use of the land", while not discouraging intensive arable farming and market-gardening in suitable areas. It was felt that ley farming would "ensure the maintenance of fertility by periodical resting of the land under grass and also the maintenance of stock-carrying capacity", the actual crop rotation being varied according to soil fertility.

Tractors and ploughs now till the fine loam on land reclaimed over centuries from the sea and for almost as long world-famous as sheep-pasture. There has always been a small amount of arable—

We can thus expect to continue to see large flocks of sheep grazing quietly on rich pastures while, on the other side of the dyke, girls will be picking tulips or daffodils for London, and rattling mechanized lifters bringing to the surface tons of potatoes soon to be taken away by lorry to the market. Overhead will often be seen the heavy Bristol freighter planes roaring their way to the continent from Lympne airport. Lympne, overlooking the Marsh, provides yet another instance of the effect of changing geographical values in the region.

While following one of its earlier courses, the Limen (or Rother) river entered the sea to the west of Hythe and the Romans were able to develop Portus Lemanis. Of the fortress which overlooked the sheltered anchorage, now given the Saxon name of Stutfall Castle, there remains today but the ruins of many stone walls scattered on the grassy slopes dropping down to the Military Canal—apparently very much damaged by a landslide of the old cliff line. With the Rother later



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—on Romney Marsh, but in the last fifteen years a minor agricultural revolution has taken place which—on account of the high yields obtainable—is likely to be permanent. Tulips, potatoes, tomatoes or wheat are now grown on acres formerly bearing perennial rye grass and white clover



By courtesy of Silver City Airways Ltd

Just up the hill from the site of the now-landlocked Roman Portus Lemanis is a new port of a different kind: Lympne aerodrome, from which motors are quickly ferried by air over the Channel

changing its course and the Marsh being reclaimed, the seaport of Lympne rapidly died and it was not until the 20th century that Lympne once again became important, this time as a cross-channel airport. The aerodrome, still largely grass, just north of the old cliff line, is now the scene of thriving activity, especially in the holiday season. Its major function is as a base for the cross-Channel ferry service of Silver City Airways, transporting cars, cycles, passengers and freight. For the motorist particularly, with straightforward and swift loading or unloading (by ramp through the opened nose of the aircraft) and the short twenty-minute flight to Le Touquet, this air route has many advantages over the sea crossing. The geography of Lympne has achieved new value.

So the landscape continues to change, even the landscape of Romney Marsh with its independent personality. To the discerning visitor travelling slowly along the winding roads, the geography of the Marsh is seen to be irrevocably linked to the history which saw it evolve.

The present landscape pattern is a composite picture in which facets of the geography of the past are well represented; and, far from being static, dynamic qualities continue to reform the pattern before our eyes. The landscape, as we see it, is a 'palimpsest', or manuscript, on which the writing of today—the deep straight dykes, the gaily painted villas, the concrete sea-wall, the large glasshouses—is superimposed on the writings of earlier phases in its history. The large-scale Ordnance Survey map shows this clearly, but even that excellent portrayal of the countryside soon becomes out of date, unable to mark the continuing changes. The only way to appreciate the manner in which the face of the Marsh is changing, while retaining within much of its old spirit, is undoubtedly to spend some time there—listening to the cry of the peewit above the hum of tractors, watching sheep browse while flowers are picked, hearing Lincolnshire and Kentish dialects mix in "The Shepherd and Crook"—that is, watching the changes in process.